



Fostering social entrepreneurship in rural areas through local action

EU rural areas need innovative tools to facilitate business development that helps address social issues and offers inclusive employment opportunities. A possible response can be social entrepreneurship and social enterprises, which contribute to the achievement of social as well as of economic goals. They often drive social innovation in vital aspects of rural life such as social care and health services, retail, education and training, environmental products and services, food production, culture or tourism, by re-designing and re-engineering business models and value chains, developing new clusters and networks, or establishing new relationships or collaborations between public, private and third sector organisations.

In the [Rural Action plan](#) of the long-term vision for EU's Rural Areas ([LTVRA](#)) the European Commission committed to implement a dedicated flagship initiative to promote social economy and social business to support prosperous rural areas. A number of policy instruments and funding sources are available in Europe and in Member States to boost and support social entrepreneurship at local level. The European [Commission's Social Economy Action Plan](#) launched in 2021 aims to increase further the range of support for such activities.

In the context of the [Rural Pact](#), this Good Practice Webinar will offer practitioners a range of inspiring initiatives fostering social entrepreneurship and provide an opportunity to discuss and explore them in depth. The focus of the discussions will be selected to address the interests expressed by participants in the registration form (e.g. finding the right format of social enterprise to address a specific community need, ensuring the involvement of key actors, developing the necessary skills or maintaining and developing the social enterprise in a long-term perspective).

Objectives

- > to help rural stakeholders interested in social entrepreneurship to present, exchange experience and get inspiration from projects on the ground;
- > to take stock of major **challenges faced and solutions adopted**, in particular for the twin (green and digital) transition, by rural entrepreneurs and communities to make their initiatives a reality;
- > to **build the capacity** of participants to promote social enterprise through effective high quality projects responding to the rural needs.



| Tentative Timing | Agenda items |
|----------------------|--|
| 09.00 – 9.15 | Welcome and introduction to the day Rural Pact Support Office |
| 09.15 – 09.45 | Setting the scene: social entrepreneurship as a driver for prosperous rural areas Presentations on the concept and situation of social entrepreneurship in rural areas and key policies supporting it |
| 09.45 – 10.00 | Coffee Break |
| 10.00 – 11.00 | Learning from inspirational projects and practices Presentation of examples of social enterprises & panel discussion with local practitioners to extract main challenges and lessons learnt. |
| 11.00 – 11.15 | Coffee Break |
| 11.15 – 12.15 | Learning from inspirational projects and practices Parallel breakout discussions (in 2 rounds) to enable participants to share their concerns and experiences and to draw solutions and recommendations. |
| 12.15 – 12.30 | Coffee Break |
| 12.30 – 13.00 | Reporting back from breakout sessions, final plenary discussion and closing remarks |